

LAURENS-MARATHON COMMUNITY EDUCATION

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Laurens-Marathon Community School District and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Laurens-Marathon Community School District received several Harkin fire safety grants totaling \$100,000 which it used to make extensive upgrades in their school facilities, including new emergency lighting, doors and hardware. Federal grants have made it possible for the district to provide quality and safe schools for their students.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Laurens-Marathon Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education, president Nancy Fuchs, vice president Deb Kenobbie, Dr. Brett Fehr, Terry Gunnarson and Bridget Bailey, and former members, Brett Barglof, Thaine Hopkins, Tom Schmidt, Karen Lind, Kelly Snyder, and Ken DeYoung. I would also like to recognize superintendent Iner Joelson, former superintendents Dan Braunschweig and Michael Wright, business manager Sue Wenell, and head custodian Jim Hodgell.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the Harkin school grant program in Iowa, I am obliged to point out that many thousands of school buildings and facilities across the United States are in dire need of renovation or replacement. In my State of Iowa alone, according to a recent study, some 79 percent of public schools need to be upgraded or repaired. The harsh reality is

that the average age of school buildings in the United States is nearly 50 years.

Too often, our children visit ultra-modern shopping malls and gleaming sports arenas on weekends but during the week go to school in rundown or antiquated facilities. This sends exactly the wrong message to our young people about our priorities. We have to do better.

That is why I am deeply grateful to the professionals and parents in the Laurens-Marathon Community School District. There is no question that a quality public education for every child is a top priority in that community. I salute them and wish them a very successful new school year.●

LOUISA-MUSCATINE COMMUNITY EDUCATION

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Louisa-Muscatine Community School District and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Louisa-Muscatine Community School District received Harkin grants totaling \$586,453. The district received a 2000 Harkin grant totaling \$500,000 which it used to help build an addition to the junior/senior high school which included upgrading the heating and air-conditioning system to an energy efficient geothermal system. In 2001 and 2002, fire safety grants were awarded to the district to make improvements to the electrical wiring, install heat and smoke detection units, and update emergency lighting to assure the security of students, teachers, and staff. This school is the modern, state-of-the-art facility that befits the educational ambitions and excellence of this school district. Indeed, it is the kind of school facility that every child in America deserves.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Louisa-Muscatine Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of past and present members of the board of education, Mark H. Carroll, Charles K. Clark, Dwayne Paul, Sue Hills, Randy Schultz, J. Riley Padgett, David Bieri, Angie Kemp, and Eric Schultz. I would also like to recognize superintendent Scott Grimes, former superintendent Mike Kortemeyer, and principal Roger Roskens.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the Harkin school grant program in Iowa, I am obliged to point out that many thousands of school buildings and facilities across the United States are in dire need of renovation or replacement. In my State of Iowa alone, according to a recent study, some 79 percent of public schools need to be upgraded or repaired. The harsh reality is that the average age of school buildings in the United States is nearly 50 years.

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That is why I am deeply grateful to the professionals and parents in the Louisa-Muscatine Community School District. There is no question that a quality public education for every child is a top priority in that community. I salute them and wish them a very successful new school year.●

MOUNT PLEASANT COMMUNITY EDUCATION

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Mount Pleasant Community School District and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—